

Frequently Asked Questions

City Charter Amendments 2005

The Arlington City Council has called an Election for the purpose of allowing Arlington voters to consider several amendments to the City Charter. Early voting starts April 20. Election Day is Saturday May 7, 2005.



What is a City Charter?

The City Charter is considered the fundamental law of a Home Rule municipality and is sometimes referred to as the local constitution. The City Charter describes city boundaries, provides for the form of government, establishes the number of representatives on the City Council and defines the terms of office and how the City Council will be elected. The City Charter also describes the powers of the City Council and officers appointed by the City Council. This important document was first adopted under the Home Rule amendment to the State Constitution on January 17, 1920. This definition only summarizes a portion of the contents of the City Charter. To review the City Charter in its entirety, go to the City of Arlington website at www.ci.arlington.tx.us and click on City Charter.

Terms for Elected Officials

According to the City Charter, how long can the Mayor and City Council members serve in office?

The mayor and city council members are each elected to serve two-year terms.

Can terms be increased?

Yes. The Texas Constitution was amended in 1958 to allow Home Rule cities by charter amendment to increase the terms of offices for the Mayor and City Council members beyond two years, but not more than four years.

Why are terms staggered?

Staggering the terms provides continuity on the City Council so that not more than one-half of the City Council members are new at any one time. The Mayor and City Council members from Districts 3, 4, 5 and 8 are currently elected in odd-numbered years. City Council members from Districts 1, 2, 6 and 7 are currently elected in even-numbered years.

How will the proposed amendment to the Charter change City Council terms?

If approved by voters, the terms for the Mayor and each City Council member would increase from two years to three years.

Compensation for Elected Officials

How much does the Mayor earn?

The mayor is paid \$250 per month.

How much does each City Council member earn per month?

Members of the Arlington City Council are each paid \$200 per month.

Has the compensation ever been increased for the Mayor and City Council?

Yes. Compensation for City Council members was increased when the City Charter was amended in April 1980. On October 1, 1980, the Mayor's compensation was increased from \$10 per month to \$250 per month. The pay for each City Council member was increased from \$10 per month to \$200 per month. There have been no other compensation increases since 1980.

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How will the proposed Charter amendment impact compensation for the Mayor and City Council?

If approved by voters, compensation for the Mayor would increase from \$250 per month to \$1,500 per month. The compensation for each City Council member would increase from \$200 per month to \$1,000 per month.

City Auditor

What positions are appointed by the City Council?

According to the City Charter, the City Council appoints the City Manager, Municipal Judges, City Health Officer, City Attorney and other officers as required by State Constitution or State law.

Who appoints the City Auditor?

The City Charter currently gives the City Manager the authority to appoint and remove any officer or employee of the City of Arlington that is not appointed by the City Council.

How would the proposed amendment to the City Charter change the audit process?

If approved by voters, the City Auditor would become an officer appointed by the City Council.

Council Assistants

What are Council Assistants?

Council Assistants are employees assigned to provide staffing assistance to the Mayor and members of the City Council. Individual Council assistants provide oversight of City Council members scheduling and correspondence and perform research and analysis on special projects.

How would the proposed amendment impact the role of Council Assistants?

The City Charter currently gives the Mayor and City Council the authority to appoint the City Manager, Municipal Judge, City Health Officers, City Attorney and other offices as required by State Constitution or State Law. If approved by voters, the City Council would appoint Council Assistants.

Third-Party Arbitration

What is the City Manager's role in the disciplinary appeal process for City of Arlington employees?

According to the City Charter, only the City Manager has final authority to remove an employee or employees, other than those who have been appointed by the City Council. The current disciplinary appeal process for the City of Arlington involves multiple levels of review before the City Manager issues a final determination.

What is a third-party arbitrator?

A third-party arbitrator is a qualified person who is not a City of Arlington employee who has been given the authority to hear a disciplinary appeal. To grant a third-party arbitrator final decision-making authority on disciplinary appeals requires an amendment to the City Charter.